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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to compare the effects of "regular agency" counseling and Bordin's "psychological Counseling" with disadvantaged clients in a U.S. Employment Service setting. The differences between the two approaches are spelled out, and the advantages of the psychological counseling proposed. Two criterion measures were used: (1) a revised version of Stephen's self-concept scale for determining change or adjustment; and (2) the percentage of clients who reported for scheduled testing. The sample consisted of 12 persons in each group chosen at random. They were classified as economically and culturally disadvantaged and were varied in terms of age and sex. Suggestive evidence, based on analysis of pre- and post-counseling scores, was found favoring the Bordin treatment both in terms of change on the self-concept scale and in the percentage of clients reporting for scheduled testing. The results were discussed, implications drawn, and limitations of the research mentioned. (Author/TL)

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RESEARCH DESIGN

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELING IN THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IN ASSISTING THE DISADVANTAGED

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELING IN THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IN ASSISTING THE DISADVANTAGED: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of "regular agency" Counseling and Bordin's "psychological counseling" with disadvantaged clients in a U.S. Employment Service setting. The criterion measures consisted of a revised version of Stephen's self-concept scale and the percentage of clients who reported for scheduled testing. The sample consisted of 12 persons in each group chosen at random. The subjects were classified as economically and culturally disadvantaged, and were varied in terms of age and sex. All of the subjects were Negroes. Suggestive evidence was found favoring the Bordin treatment both in terms of change on the self-concept scale and in the percentage of clients reporting for scheduled testing.

Dolores R. Marshall

The United States Employment Service has been assigned a new task with the passage of the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964. Its offices are now offering counseling services to a segment of society that has been classified as "disadvantaged" mainly because of limitations associated with their race, age, sex or religion. For the purpose of this research, the term "regular agency counseling" will be used to indicate counseling in the State Employment Service. Regular agency counseling assists persons to better understand themselves, and acquire knowledge of the world of work so that they may realistically chose, adjust or change a vocation.

The purpose of this study is to compare the effects of "regular agency counseling," which is the control condition, to Bordin's Psychological Counseling which was the experimental condition. Psychological Counseling, in a vocational setting, is concerned with persons who seem to have difficulty in making job choices and who seem unable to derive satisfaction from their jobs (Bordin, 1955).

Generally, it attempts to aid people with those problems of behavior in which the critical issues have to do with their emotions and motivations (Bordin, 1955). It varies from regular agency counseling on the following issues: (1) Psychological Counseling draws heavily from psychoanalysis, whereas regular agency counseling is eclectic. (2) Psychological Counseling permits the counselee to choose the tests he feels would benefit him the most, whereas, regular agency counseling gives the counselee a forced choice position. (3) The main purpose of Psychological Counseling is to lead the counselee to self confrontation, whereas, regular agency counseling provides occupational information for suitable placement.

It is proposed that (1) regular agency counseling does not assist persons with vocational problems of adjustment, and that any change in behavior or attitudes is due to chance; (2) psychological counseling is a better approach because it leads the client to self-confrontation which is necessary to implement change, (3) when counselees are given the opportunity to choose from a variety of tests, there will be a higher percentage of reporting for testing.

A review of the literature reveals that there are many studies concerned with counseling outcomes. One of the major sources of difficulty in evaluation is the uniqueness of the counseling problems of each individual. Roger (1951) believe that there is no reason for a theory of counseling and psychotherapy until there are observable changes ehich call for an explanation.

There has been considerable effort by investigators to show the growth or adjustment process of clients after counseling. Carlson and Vandeveur (1940) made a study of pre and post counseling differences in individuals by using the Thematic Apperception Test. The result of their study showed very small differences. Irwin Guller (1969) used the "lie items" of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Test to measure increased

stability in self-concept after counseling. The results of this study was significant at the .05 level of confidence. Other studies have shown that the congruence between self-concept and ideal self-concept can be used as a measure of adjustment with considerable confidence, (for example, Calvin and Holtzman, 1953; David and Lawton, 1961; Hanlon, et al, 1954). These studies are significant to the present study because they give the necessary scientific support to use a self-concept test before and after counseling to determine change or adjustment.

METHOD

Counselors in one of the state employment agencies were divided into two groups. Those assigned to the experimental group had been exposed to the philosophical orientation of Bordin through graduate courses in theories of counseling. They had had the opportunity to analyze his counseling approach and hear tapes utilizing methods. The remaining counselors made up the control group. There were four counselors in each group. Subjects were assigned at intake to a particular counselor, therefore, the process of randomization was used in the selection of counselors for each group. Edligibility for selection was that the person be classified as a vocational counseling case, and had not experienced over two counseling interviews.

Each subject was given a self-concept inventory derived from Stephenson's Q-Sorts before Counseling, and the same instrument was administered after completion of counseling to each subject (Byrne 1966). The instrument consisted of 35 items, and the counselee was asked to circle the number under each item that he felt best described him as he saw himself at the present. The average number of counseling sessions per client was four. This number was common to both groups. There was no difference in the percentage of clients terminated before counseling was completed.

RESULTS

The purpose of the self-concept inventory was to establish the differences in pre and post counseling scores made by subjects in each group, and to see if the differences between the groups were significant at the .05 level of confidence. Those subjects involved in regular agency counseling did not show a significant change in the self-concept after counseling. The probability of chance caused the difference was $P > .05$. The two sets of scores showed a positive correlation($r = .72$, $P < .05$). The computation of r was necessary in order to find a significant t-ratio for the small sample of matched scores(Spence, et al, 1968).

TABLE I
Control Group Scores

Differences in Pre and Post Counseling Self-Concept Scores Made by Subjects in Regular Agency Counseling Group

Before Counseling		After Counseling		Differences
27		21		-6
23		26		3
28		24		4
16		19		3
29		29		0
25	$\bar{X}_1 = 25.0$	22	$\bar{X}_2 = 24.0$	-3
23		26		3
22		15		-7
29		30		1
30		31		1
28		26		-2
21		20		-1
$\sigma X_1 = 4.2$				$\sigma X_2 = 5.0$

A comparison of the scores made by subjects in the experimental group on the self concept inventory also showed no significant difference at the .05 level.

TABLE II
Experimental Group Scores

Differences in Pre and Post Counseling Self-Concept Scores made by Subjects that received Psychological Counseling

Before Counseling		After Counseling		Differences
16		27		11
23		28		5
29		23		-6
22		25		3
21		14		-7
24	$\bar{X}_1$=22.3	15	$\bar{X}_2$=23.3	-9
6	$\sigma_{\bar{X}_1}$=6.2	18	$\sigma_{\bar{X}_2}$=5.8	12
30		32		2
22		26		4
22		18		-4
25		25		0
28		29		1

r=.43 P<.05 t=.26 P>.05

However, when the score differences made by the subjects in the experimental group during pre and post counseling conditions were compared, there was a significant difference. The probability of chance causing the differece was P>.05. This indicates that even though there was no significant change in self-concept within each group, there was a

greater degree of change in the group of psychological counseling cases than there were in regular agency counseling. The probability of chance causing this difference was $P < .05$.

There was a pronounced tendency in both groups for extreme scores to modify their post-counseling scores toward the direction of the mean. Part of this change can be accounted for by the statistical phenomena of "regression toward the mean". However, the fact that the experimental group made significantly greater(P .05) score changes suggests that more actual behavioral change occured in the experimental group.

TABLE III
Comparison of Score Differences
Made by Subjects in Each Group

Psychological Counseling		Regular Agency Counseling	
11		-6	
5		3	
-6		-4	
3		3	
-7		0	
-9	$\bar{X}_1$=5.3	-3	$\bar{X}_2$ = 2.8
12		3	
2		-7	
4		1	
-4		1	
0		-2	
1		-1	
37	$\sigma \bar{X}_1$=3.7	$\sigma \bar{X}_2$= 2.0	11
-26			-23

t=2.08 P<.05

The results of the findings that illustrated the percentage of reporters to testing showed that when the subjects decided what test to take and were given respect for that decision, 78 per cent reported for testing. Of those subjects who were part of the control group, only 53 percent reported for scheduled testing. These subjects were

scheduled for testing based solely upon the counselor's decision as to what was best for the counselee. The difference in the two proportions fall just short of the traditional .05 level of confidence($P < .08$), but given the small size of the sample, the results remain highly suggestive. These results indicate that counselees will report more often under the conditions of the experimental group counseling because the test chosen was significant to their purposes.

Discussion

The Employment Service should utilize a counseling theory that would bring about growth for its clientele. It now has the role of providing services to a segment of society, namely, the disadvantaged, that here-to-fore had not received such assistance. Due to its newly assigned role, the Employment Service has the capacity to reduce stress and increase motivation through competent counseling and guidance services. This research design shows that regular agency counseling, which has an eclectic basis, only provides occupational information to its subjects and does not create the minimum conditions for counselee self-confrontation which is necessary to implement change.

However, this research has some limitations. The sample was small due to intake restrictions at the time of the study. Many of the subjects had low reading levels and had to be read the items on the self-concept inventory. Also, counselors involved in the experimental group were very new at applying the philosophical concept of Bordin. The results still present a challenge to those persons involved in Employment Service Counseling. Regular agency counseling appeared to offer no significant change in the self-concept of the disadvantaged, or indicated growth or adjustment as the result of the counseling process.

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